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A
S E R M O N

Occasion'd by the

D E A T H

O F

His ROYAL HIGHNESS

Prince *GEORGE* of *Denmark*,

Preach'd at *WESTMINSTER*,

November the 7th, 1708.

By GILES DENT.

L O N D O N,

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Pfal. LXXXIX. 47, 48.

Remember how short my time is : wherefore hast thou made all Men in vain ?

What Man is he that liveth, and shall not see Death ? Shall he deliver his Soul from the Hand of the Grave ? Selah.

THE Design of the Author of this Psalm, whosoever it was, seems to have been this, in the first Part of it to describe the Mercies that God had promis'd to bestow on *David*, and his Successors, to the End of all Generations. But it seems, that these Mercies were, at the Time of writing this Psalm, suspended, upon the Account of the Iniquity of the People of the *Jews*, as we may read, *ver. 31, 32.* where God is pleas'd to express himself thus, *that if they break his Statutes, and keep not his Commandments, he would visit their Iniquity with a Rod, and their Transgression with Stripes.*

Now as they had broke his Statutes, so he also visited them accordingly ; and not only with-held from them the Mercies he had promis'd, but added also the Infliction of his Judgments on them.

And this the Psalmist teaches us, when in the *38th Verse* he complains after this Manner : *But thou hast cast off, and abhorr'd ; thou hast been wroth with thine Anointed : Thou hast made void the Covenant of thy Servant ; thou hast profan'd his Crown, by casting it to the Ground, &c.* By which, and the following Expressions, we may conjecture, that the Circumstances of the *Jews* in the *Babylonish Captivity* are described ; but however that be, thus much is certain, that they were, either Prince or People, or both, in a deplorable Condition, which gives the Psalmist Occasion to expostulate with God for Mercy in the latter End of the Psalm ; for thus says he, *ver. 46. How long, O Lord ! wilt thou hide thy self for ever ? Shall thy Wrath burn like Fire ?* And then, in the Words of the Text, he adds this as a Reason, why the Judgments of God should be removed, *Remember how short my time is : wherefore hast thou made*

all Men in vain? That is, supposing there was no other Life than this, which is short and transitory, and that Men were to be depriv'd of the Mercies of God in it, the Psalmist was ready to think, that God had made all Men in vain; because every Man was liable to Death; nor could he deliver himself from it, any more than he could not ward off those Afflictions that God thought fit to lay upon him; or bestow upon himself those Mercies, which he earnestly desir'd, and stood in need of, to make his Life tolerable, whilst it lasted.

Since then this was the Condition of all the Sons of Men, the Psalmist concludes hence, that they must needs have been created in vain, that is, to themselves, and to any Ends and Purposes that the Divine Being, in his Apprehension, could be suppos'd to have form'd concerning them.

Wherefore the Subject that we have before us to discourse on, from these Words, will be this,

That the Consideration of the Shortnes of this present Life, the Miseries to which we are liable in it, and the Certainty of our Departure out of it, shows the Vanity of all Men in the World, if you take away the Consideration of a future State.

In discoursing on which Subject, I shall do these three Things.

I. I shall consider the Shortnes of this Life, as an Evidence of the Vanity of Men.

II. Shall further show you, that the Miseries we are liable to in it, are also an Argument of it. And,

III. That since no Man lives, and shall not see Death, and no Man can deliver his Soul from the Grave, Man appears to be a vain Creature, according to the Assertion of the Psalmist.

To each of which I shall speak as briefly as I can, and then proceed to what I design by way of Application.

I. I am to consider the Shortnes of Life, as an Evidence of the Vanity of Men: *Remember how short my time is!*

And here I must do these two things:

1. Show you what I mean by Vanity.

2. Consider the Shortnes of Life as an Evidence of it.

1. Then, by Vanity, I would desire to understand, That the Purposes and Designs of Men are vain, and to very little Purpose: That whatever Projects they lay, or whatever Schemes they erect, they are to little Advantage, either to their own Advancement, or to the Good of others; and this Solomon evidently shows us thro'out the whole of *Ecclesiastes*, where he makes it his Business to set before us the Vanity of Mankind in all Ages, Circumstances, and Conditions. And this is most certainly true, that let the Designs of Men be what they will, and their Quality

lity as great as possible, they do seldom or never fully answer the great things they propose by them, because the Shortnes of Human Life will not permit them to take Effect.

Or again, by Vanity we may understand this, That the Psalmist seems to imagine, that God had created Men to very little Purpose, as to the Advancement of his Glory or Honour, that they were all made in vain on this Account; and seeing they liv'd so short a time in this World, they had not an Opportunity, or Space enough to subserve his Glory as they ought to do.

Or once more, that *all Men were made in vain*, or made vain, as they were so soon to leave the World, and consequently not fit to be depended on, or trusted in; and therefore, that who-soever placed their Trust in Princes, trusted in a broken Reed, and would find themselves deceiv'd, since their time on Earth was of so short Continuance; and hence He in the Psalm, who-ever He was that wrote it, seems to be very sensible of his own Vanity in this Particular, and tells us, that it was in Truth the common Case of all Mankind, that no Man could repose his Trust and Confidence in Men.

Or lastly, when it is said, *he hath made all Men in vain*, we may suppose it meant, that all Men were subject to Vanity, and liable to it, as the Apostle to the Romans says, *The whole Creation was made subject to Vanity, not willingly, but by Reason of him who has subjected the same in Hope*; that is, they are all made subject to Corruption and Dissolution, and shall all perish; for, *Who is he that liveth, and shall not see Death? Or, Who can deliver his Soul from the Grave?*

This then being what we are to understand by Vanity, I proceed now,

2. To shew you, That the Shortnes of this Life is an Evidence of it.

And I scarce need to inform you, that Human Life is short, it is abundantly evident to the Experience of all Men. *The Days of our Years*, says Moses, in the 90th Psalm, v. 10. *are threescore Years and ten*; and if by reason of Strength, they be fourscore Years, yet is their Strength Labour and Sorrow, for it is soon cut off, and we fly away. And this was the common Period of Human Life in those Days, and very few arrive at 'em; of which it is certainly true what Moses says, that if they be fourscore Years, yet is the Strength, by which Men arrive at so long a Continuance in this World, Labour and Sorrow: There are very few that are sensible of the Enjoyments of Life at that Age, or who can be serviceable to themselves, or to others; and consequently

A Sermon occasion'd by the

this is an Evidence of the Vanity of Mankind, because a Man may live till he is useles, tho' his Life is so very short at its greatest Length. Nay, he may live to be accounted a Burthen to the Earth: He may live to such an Age, when all his former Usefulness and Service is forgotten, and 'till Men are apt to conceive of him, not as what he has been, but as what he then is, which to be sure is good for very little.

But in as much as the greatest part of Mankind do never arrive at so great an Age, the Shortnes of Human Life is yet greater, and their Vanity as apparent.

And hence it is that in Scripture we are sometimes said, *to pass our Years as a Tale that is told*. Sometimes it is said, *A Man is like a Flower, he cometh up, and is cut down*; he makes, as it were, an Appearance in the World, and then he is gone, and *the Eye that saw him, shall see him no more*. So is he also *like a Shadow, he flees away, and continues not*. All which Metaphors, with divers others in Scripture, do serve to illustrate the Shortnes of our Lives in this World.

And from hence we may plainly see the Vanity of Men. For so short is his Life, that he has not time therein to form any great Designs, and put them in Execution: The Multitude of things that are necessary on this Occasion, show Life to be too short to accomplish them. If indeed a Man could wholly employ himself in one particular Business, and enjoy his Health, and all necessary Advantages, to a good old Age, he might perhaps arrive at something considerable in it by that time; but where is he that has all these Advantages, or that could promise them to himself? And now, whereas most Men are engag'd in Variety of Affairs, and needs must be so, the Shortnes of their Lives does not afford 'em time enough to make a Progres that is considerable, or that is proportionate to the Nature of the things themselves; and as they might do, if God had seen fit to have added to the Days of their Lives, and to *their appointed time*.

And tho' indeed, on this Account, the Psalmist seems here to argue the Divine Providence, as if the End of Mens Creation was not answer'd, since their Lives were so short: Yet if we consider, that *they are only thus made subject to Vanity in Hope*, (*viz.* of a Resurrection) after which they shall live for ever, and for ever encrease in Knowledge, the Wisdom of the Divine Providence is abundantly vindicated, how much soever it might seem to be deficient, when this Consideration was forgotten.

But however, the Shortnes of Life to be sure is an Evidence of the Vanity of Men, as it respects our Dependence upon them;

them; because if Life is thus short, we are very much to blame to lay a great Stress upon the Lives either of our selves or others: And how strangely we shall find our selves deceived, when at the Death of any Person we should say, We trusted that this was he that should have done thus and thus for us. A vain Trust indeed! What knew you not the Shortnes of Human Life, that Man was as a Flower, and as a Shadow, of no Stay and Continuance, and why then would you place so great Trust and Confidence in him? Wherefore, says the Psalmist, *Psal. 146. 3, 4. Put not your Trust in Princes, nor in the Sons of Men, in whom there is no Help: His Breath goeth forth, he returneth to the Earth, in that very Day his Thoughts perish.* Whence it is that the Psalmist, *Psal. 118. 8, 9. determines, That it is better to trust in the Lord, than to put Confidence in Men: It is better to trust in the Lord, than to put Confidence in Princes.* And there's very good Reason for it, because whilst Man's Breath goeth forth, and his Thoughts perish, God is from everlasting to everlasting, and his Years fail not.

And as the Shortnes, so also, II. The Miseries of Human Life, which all Men are liable to, and a great many feel, are Evidences of the Vanity of Men.

Now such is the unhappy State and Condition of Men in this World, that they are said in Scripture, *to be born to Trouble as the Sparks fly upward*; and Jacob complains both of the Shortnes, and also of the Miseries of his Life, when he tells the King of Egypt, *That few and evil had the Days of his Pilgrimage been.* And the same may be said, with a great deal of Truth, by every Man that comes into this World; for from our Infancy to our Grave, Troubles are constantly attending us, and we are always liable to 'em: Nay, the longer our Lives last, the more and greater are the Miseries we are expos'd to. And it needs must be so, since even Life it self may grow burthensome, and the least Accidents discompose and make us uneasy; for the very Grasshopper may be a Burthen, as Solomon in *Ecclesiastes* shows us, in his admirable Description of a decrepid old Age.

But there are very few that need live to such an Age, to feel, by their own Experience, the Miserableness of Human Life, or Troubles every way surround us; and such is our Folly, that if they do not, we are apt to create them to our selves, and have Skill enough to torment our selves with the Fears of future Evils, when we feel none at present: And they who once give way to the Consideration of what Troubles may possibly fall upon them, and fancy to themselves all the dreadful

Evils they can imagine, make themselves for the present so much Trouble, that abundantly makes good the Assertion, and shows the Miserableness of Human Life. And thus *Solomon* tells us, *Eccles. 8. 6, 7. Because there is Time and Judgment to every Purpose, therefore the Misery of Man is great upon him: For he knoweth not that which shall be, for who can tell him when it shall be?* And indeed the Ignorance of Futurity, in a great many Cases, do's inhanse our Misery; and, as *Solomon* says, *make it great upon us*, (because from hence we know not how to act, or what Event to hope for, from our Actions, for none can we promise our selves) *since we know not what shall be; and what shall be after us, who can tell?*

Now this is a farther Evidence of the Vanity of Human Life, that Men are of few Days, and yet born to Trouble: That they are so much expos'd to it, that there scarce ever was a Man in this World, that at his going out of it has not had his Share of the Troubles and Miseries of this Life, which are incident to Human Nature. And hence appears the Vanity of Men, because hereby, as well as from the Shortnes of their Lives, they are hindred from doing what they propos'd, and from executing what they design'd; for when they are in Trouble, whether it be of Body or Mind, they to be sure cannot act for their own, or for the Advantage of others, as they had purpos'd in their Minds to do: And this takes away, tho not from the Time of Life, yet from the Time of the Serviceableness and Usefulness of Life, and Life without that is very little to be desired; for a Man had e'en as good cease to be at all, as always live in Misery and Trouble, always unable to do Service in the World, and a Burthen, rather than an Advantage, to all about him.

And the Vanity of Men, consider'd in these Circumstances, is also more apparent in this Case, that they are unfit to be depended on in Times of Trouble; for when they are unable to keep off Trouble from invading themselves, or to remove 'em, when they are fallen into 'em, how is it to be conceived they should, in a great many Cases, be able to do that for us, which we see they are not able to do for themselves?

And of this we have a very remarkable Instance in the Case of *Job*, in the 29th Chapter of that Book, he tells us, in his Prosperity, how very ready he was to do good to all about him in divers Instances of it. *Did I not*, says he, *in the 25th of the 30th Chapter, weep for him that was in Trouble? Was not my Soul grieved for the Poor? When I looked for Good, then Evil came; and when I waited for Light, then came Darknes; my Bowels boiled, and*
rested

rested not. And he thought, or at least pleas'd himself with the Imagination, that he should have always been in this happy Circumstance and Condition. Then, when he was in Prosperity, he said, *I shall die in my Nest, and I shall multiply my Days as the Sand.* And yet you see, such is the Vanity of Men, he found himself miserably disappointed, for the *Days of Affliction* prevented him, he went Mourning without the Sun: His Skin was black upon him, his Harp was turned into Mourning, and his Organ into the Voice of those that weep; that is, all his Joy was gone and vanish'd, and now he was perfectly incapable of doing any good to others, or of receiving any from 'em: So that he is now forc'd to cry out, *O that I were as in Months past, as in the Days when God preserved me!* And this is as signal an Instance of the Vanity of Men, on this Account, as can possibly be given; for Job was a great Man, a Prince, or King in the East, and therefore if Greatness would have exempted him from Evil, he had gone nigh to have escap'd it: He was no less good than great, and Goodness and Mercy is the best Security that can be against Evils and Afflictions; and yet you find this great and good Man labouring under so prodigious a Weight of Misery, that his Patience, though it was the greatest that ever any of the Sons of Men was blest with, was put to its utmost Trial; and, when he curses the Day of his Birth, and wishes for Death, to ease him of his Troubles, seems to be almost lost.

And from hence it is that the Psalmist seems to have spoken these Words, *Why hast thou made all Men in vain?* so many were the Afflictions and Miseries that himself had met with, that he says in ver. 44, 45, *Thou hast made his Glory to cease, and his Crown hast thou cast down to the Ground: The Days of his Youth hast thou shortened, thou hast cover'd him with Shame. Selah!* that is, by the Afflictions that had befallen him, Age had crept on him, as it were, before his Time; or, the Troubles he had undergone, rendred him as unfit and incapable of acting, as if he had been really decrepid, and the Days of his Youth had been shorten'd. And this is also an Evidence of the Vanity of Mankind, since their Lives are not only short, but liable to be made burthensome by a thousand real or imaginary Evils that befall 'em. And 'tis much at one, in this Case, whether they be real, or only fancied, because, we may make our selves as unhappy with imaginary Troubles, that we think we are at present, or perhaps hereafter shall be in, as if we really felt 'em. And this abundantly shows our Vanity, that Imagination has so great a Power over us, to render us uneasy, and disturb our Happiness.

But

But once more, III. The Vanity of Man further appears in this, that no Man lives that shall not see Death, and no one can deliver his Soul from the Grave;

That is, 'Tis appointed to Men once to die; and, No Man hath Power over the Spirit, to retain the Spirit; neither hath he Power in the Day of Death, nor can he deliver his Soul from the Grave.

Now this Expression of delivering his Soul from the Grave, seems to imply, that some should be so fond as to imagine, that they should, by some Means or other, be able to escape the Power of Death, and the House appointed for all living; But since Sin hath entred into the World, Death entred into it also; and all Men must die, because all have sinned. So that let a Man do whatever he can to prolong his Life, let his Power, his Riches, his Wisdom, Goodnes, or Usefulness in the World, be never so great, yet he is not able to deliver his Soul from the Grave; for this is a Warfare in which there is no Discharge.

Let a Man try, by the most regular Course of Life, and by the most careful Behaviour; let him enjoy the best Constitution of Body, have all the Advantages of Life, and none of the Troubles and Miseries of it attending him, yet even this Man can't live for ever, his Time appointed will come, and those Bounds which he cannot, must not pass: And tho such a Course might prolong his Life, yet it would be e'en as vain an Attempt for a Creature to go about to make himself immortal in this World, as to make himself Omnipotent.

And the same is to be said of Power; for the greatest Monarchs that ever were in the World are all brought down to the Sides of the Pit; and let 'em, whilst alive, employ their Power e'en how they will, if they are wise as the Angels of God, if they are as good as Creatures can possibly be, if they are never so useful to the World, and their Lives never so much desired by their Subjects, yet still all this will not secure 'em from the Grave, nor can they deliver their Souls from it.

If they have form'd the best Designs imaginable for the Good of Nations, and if their whole Thoughts and Study are for the publick Advantage, and if they only desire Life on that Account: All these are so far from keeping 'em from the Grave, that they will not suspend that Hour for one Moment, but they may indeed the sooner bring it upon 'em.

And if the greatest Goodnes and Service to Mankind will not deliver a Man's Soul from the Grave, to be sure an Abuse of Power will not; for as there is no Discharge in that War, so neither will Wickednes deliver those that are given to it, but it will

will abundantly hasten it, for the Wicked shall not live out half their Days, for they are continually urging on their own Ruin.

Now in as much as nothing can save a Man from Death, he appears on this Account also to be very vain in all the Respects that I have mention'd; for what Dependance is there in Man, whose Breath is in his Nostrils? What good Purposes and Designs is he able to serve, that cannot live to put in Execution those Projects which himself has laid? For he gives up the Ghost, and where is he? In that Day all his Thoughts perish, and all Dependance on him is frustrated and disappointed, because he is so far made subject to Vanity, that he needs must see Corruption. And on this Account all Mankind are on the same Level, the Rich, the Poor, the Prince and the Slave: All must lie down in the Grave, and the Eye that sees them now, will see them no more; for as the Cloud is consumed and vanisheth away, so he that goeth down to the Grave, shall come up no more: He shall return to his House no more, neither shall his Place know him any more, Job. 7. 8, &c.

And therefore Solomon, on this Account, in the Book of Ecclesiastes, compares Men to the very Beasts themselves, Eccles. 18. 19. I said in mine Heart concerning the Estate of the Sons of Men, that God might manifest them, and that they may see that themselves are Beasts; for that which befallerh the Sons of Men, befallerh Beasts, even one thing befallerh them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other, yea they have all one Breath; so that a Man hath no Pre-eminence above a Beast, for all is Vanity. All go unto one Place, all are of the Dust, and all turn to Dust again.

So that thus I have, as briefly as I could, set before you the Vanity of Men in these Three Instances, the Shortnes and the Miseries of the Life of Man, and the Certainty of his Departure out of it, according to the Expression of the Text, Remember how short my Time is; wherefore hast thou made all Men in vain? What Man is he that liveth, and shall not see Death? Or who can deliver his Soul from the hand of the Grave? Selah!

The Application that I shall make of this Discourse, shall be contained in these following Particulars.

Ist. From what I have said of the Vanity of Mankind, I infer the Unreasonableness of putting Trust or Confidence in Man.

IIdly. Since Man is liable to so much Vanity, I observe the Happines of the Revelation of a future State, where he shall be for ever free from it.

IIIIdly. Since Life is so short, and Death so certain, the Wisdom of making a timely Preparation for it.

IVthly.

IVthly. That the Consideration of the Necessity that all Men are under to depart out of this World, one time or other, should moderate our Grief for the Loss of our Friends.

1st. From what I have said of the Vanity of Mankind, I infer the Unreasonableness of putting Trust or Confidence in Man.

For is it not a strange thing for a reasonable Creature to put his Trust in one, whom he knows is as liable to Vanity as himself, and expos'd altogether to the same Troubles and Afflictions: And since no Man is exempted from the common Lot, in vain is our Dependance on Man.

And of this we have an Instance before us this Day, in the Death of his Royal Highness Prince *GEORGE* of *Denmark*, whom neither the Greatness of his Birth, nor the Highness of his Station, nor those good Qualities which were conspicuous in him, could secure from Troubles and Afflictions in this Life, nor from the Hands of Death, and the Power of the Grave.

In this Warfare, in which there is no Discharge, the Greatness of his Birth could not profit him at all; tho' born a Prince, and Brother of a King. No! Nor would the Highness of his Station add to his Days, or prolong his appointed time; and his Station was as high as any Subject was capable of enjoying, being invested with the highest Places of Power and Trust, and married to our Sovereign Lady *ANN*, by the Grace of God, of *Great Britain, France, and Ireland*, Queen. In a Word, tho' his Honour was as great as any Man could possess, a Crown only excepted, he was forc'd to submit to the Power of Death, and lie down in the Grave.

Nor would the good Qualities that were conspicuous in him, prevent his falling into the hands of Death.

Among which we may reckon his Zeal for the Protestant Religion, at the Time of the Revolution, a Time never to be forgotten by all true *Britains*! He dar'd to appear in Defence of Religion, in the worst and most hazardous Times, which, together with our Liberties, was at that Day invaded: And in the Letter which he sent to the then King of *England*, he let him know, that it was Religion, which was a justifiable Cause, if any was, and not Faction and Rebellion, to which he could have no Temptation that mov'd Him to forsake him, who was both his Father and his King.

Which courageous and wise Procedure of the Prince, inspir'd the Defenders of Liberty and Religion, and dispirited the Invaders, when they found themselves forsaken by One of his Rank and Quality.

Such

Such likewise was his *Justice* to all that were concern'd with him; such his *Humility* and *Condescension*, as far as was consistent with his State and Grandeur, and becoming a Person of his Quality,

Such was his *Conjugal Fidelity* to his *Royal Consort*; a Vertue so well known, and so frequently spoken of, that there is no need to multiply Words in this Case. Only this I would desire to observe, that this *Fidelity* was the more remarkable on these two Accounts: In as much as Persons of the *Prince's* Condition, are apt to take too great Liberties this way, and to look upon it as very allowable, or at least excusable so to do. Besides, that the *Prince* was married in a Time, wherein at Court there was too much Encouragement given, and too many and great Examples of the Breach of this Fidelity.

To which good Qualities let me add his Charity to the Poor and Needy, particularly to those of his own Country, who were in Distres, either here or at home; and his Charity likewise in entertaining such favourable Thoughts of those that differ'd in Religion from him, as sometimes to communicate with the Church of *England* as by Law establish'd, without being guilty of Hypocrisy, which some are so fond to charge on all those that allow themselves in this Practice.

None of these good Qualities could preserve him from the Power of the Grave. And if Men of like State and Grandeur with that *Prince*, for whom the Nation now mourns, would in all these good Qualities follow his illustrious Example; especially, if in their several Stations they would employ their Power, as their Health permits them, (and his too much denied him, to make Use of according to his Desire and Design) the Affairs of this Nation would be every way in a more flourishing Condition both at home and abroad, and Vice would be more discourag'd and discountenanc'd, as was always done by this *Prince* towards all those that were about him.

And now since we have such an Instance of the Vanity of Mankind before us, let us never place too great Trust and Confidence in Men, no, nor in Princes; for we see both in the present Case, and that of our late Sovereign King *William III.* that no Vertue, Civil or Military, nor Usefulness to the World, how great soever it is, will save Mens Souls from the Power of the Grave.

Wherefore let us, as becomes Men and Christians, place our Trust and Dependance on the Lord; and whilst we rejoice in the Continuance of the Life of her present *Majesty*, on the Throne of these Kingdoms, and continually offer up our Prayers

ers to the Almighty God, that many Days may be added to it; let us however not place our Confidence in any of the Children of Men, but alone in Him, *who is the Rock of Ages, and the Confidence of the Ends of the Earth.*

Illy. Since a Man is liable to so much Vanity, I observe the Happines of the Revelation of a future State, where he shall be for ever free from it.

Now this Revelation, which we have of a Life after this, takes away all manner of Objections against the Vanity of Men, because there is a Time coming, when he shall be for ever free from it. And therefore the Shortnes of Human Life, to a good Man, is no Disadvantage at all; but on the other Hand, 'tis a mighty Happines, because then, he will not be long expos'd to the Miseries of this Life; and if these do continue 'till Death, he knows, that *few and evil are the Days of his Pilgrimage*, and that then he shall lie down in the Grave, *where the Wicked cease from troubling, where the Weary are at rest; where the Prisoners rest together, and hear not the Voice of the Oppressor; then shall he lie still, and be at quiet, he shall sleep, and be at rest.* Nay more, that he shall have an Entrance administered to him into those Regions of Happines, which this Life, the time of his Trial, was only to prepare him for; and in as much as he here, by a *patient Continuance in well-doing, sought for Glory, and Honour, and Immortality*, he shall there reap *eternal Life.*

And this Discovery of a future State is sufficient to support the Minds of good Men under abundance of Evils that they feel in this World; and whereas *Afflictions* are often bestowed upon Men, *that the Trial of their Faith may work Patience, and Patience may have its perfect Work; so that they may be entire, and wanting nothing;* so St. Paul to the Corinthians assures us, *That our light Afflictions, which are but for a Moment, work for us a far more exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory.* And the Consideration of the Weight of Glory's being *far more exceeding and eternal too*, will enable us to bear a great deal of Affliction in the Hopes of it.

III. Since Life is so short, and Death so certain, I infer the Wisdom of making a timely Preparation.

There is not one, as we may see, among all the Sons of Men, that can expect Immortality, without he first puts off Mortality, that he may obtain it. And therefore since this is what every Man must sooner or later undergo, it is highly reasonable, that in the Time of his Health and Vigour, he should make Preparation for that Day, which will introduce him into an unknown, and, for the most part, an unthought of, tho' an eternal

nal World. It will bring him into a State, where he must be either happy or miserable to all Eternity. And since there is so much depends upon the short Duration of this Life, as everlasting Happines or Misery, it is undoubtedly the truest, and indeed the only Wisdom, to make a sutable Preparation for it, that after this short, this miserable Life has an End, we may have an Entrance into the Joy of our Lord.

To which Purpose, let us think on our Ways, and be wise, and turn our Feet to the Divine Testimonies; let us make haste, and delay not to keep the Divine Commandments: Let us frequently view the Glories of the invisible World, and contemplate the Happines of the Blest above, in those pure Regions where Sin and Sorrow know no Entrance, to withdraw our Minds from the fading and perishing Enjoyments of this Life.

Let us look upon that alone to be Life; and this present State, in Comparison of that, to be altogether Vanity: That it is the great Design of our living in this World, that we may be perfectly and for ever happy in the World to come; and therefore may we be so wise, as having so great a Pearl of Price put into our Hands, to make a sutable Improvement of it, and thereby lay up for our selves Treasures in Heaven, which will be of perpetual and everlasting Advantage to us!

And on the other Hand, let us think of the unspeakable Misery that shall befall us, if we neglect to make this Preparation; and let the Terrors of the Lord engage us, as well as his Mercy draw us, to consult our own Happines and Welfare, and not be guilty of our own Ruin; for our Destruction will be of our selves, if we neglect and despise those Offers of Grace and Mercy, which are made to us in the Gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. O! therefore that all of us were so wise as to understand this, and to consider our latter End! that so when God shall be pleased to take us out of this World, we may be for ever happy in his Presence, where there are Rivers of Pleasures, and at his Right Hand, where there are Joys for ever more!

Once more, IVthly and Lastly, I observe, that the Consideration that all Men must pass out of the World some time or other, should moderate our Grief for the Loss of our Friends.

We are apt to be concern'd at the Loss of our Relations, and Friends, and to grieve at it; and so indeed we may be allowed to do, provided, that Grief be not excessive, and such as hinders us from discharging the Duties of our Places, be they what they will. Religion never was design'd to make us insensible or stupid; it allows us to sorrow, tho' not as such as are without Hope, or as such as had no Expectation of ever seeing them again, because

cause the same Religion teaches us, *That we shall all stand on the Earth at the last Day, and that tho' we are sowed in Weakness, in Vanity, and in Corruption, yet we shall be raised in Power, in Glory, and incorruptible.* This therefore should moderate our Grief for the Loss of our Relations and Friends, how dear soever they are to us.

And tho' I confess it is easier to know, what we ought to do in any of the Cases, where the Passions and Affections are concern'd, than to be able to do it, or to govern them as we ought; yet I think *David*, as a King, is a very suitable Example in this Case, both as to the Excels and Moderation of his Grief.

When he had lost his Son *Absalom*, we are told, that *the King was much moved, and went up to the Chamber over the Gate, and wept: and as he went, thus he said, O my Son Absalom! my Son! my Son Absalom! would God I had died for thee. O Absalom! my Son! my Son!* 2 Sam. 18. 33.

And the Consequence of this immoderate Grief was this: The People, finding the King thus immerst in Sorrow, that he had forgot the Victory his Forces that Day had obtain'd, and that he neglected public Affairs, had like to have revolted from him, till the King was perswaded to let his private Grief give way to public Joy.

But then we have another very remarkable Instance of the Moderation of the Grief of the same King. His Son that he had of *Bathsheba*, *Uriah's* Wife, was dead, and his Servants were afraid to tell him, lest he should have been over-whelm'd therewith; but no sooner did he know it, but he arose, and came into the House of the Lord, and worshipp'd, and eat and drank as before, and got an entire Mastery over his Passions, saying, *I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me:* 2 Sam. 12. 23. And this shows excessive and immoderate Grief to be altogether in vain, because it can do no good, but may, and often does a deal of Harm.

Wherefore to conclude, since we cannot imagine, that any that are departed out of this Life shall return to us, but that every one of us certainly shall go to them, it is our Wisdom to prepare to follow 'em, and to moderate our Grief for their Loss and not sorrow as those that have no Hope; for if we believe that *Jesus* died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in *Jesus* will God bring with him. Of which Number God grant every one of us may be so happy as to be, thro' the Merits and Mediation of our Lord and Saviour *Jesus Christ*. To whom, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, we give all Honour, Praise Power and Glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

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